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Food and Nutrition

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Floods Hit
Southeast

WITHOUT FANFARE EACH month the food stamp program issues more than \$175 million in bonus coupons to over 12 million low-income people throughout the Nation.

All too often, however, the routine of the program is brought to a halt. When natural disasters strike, the food stamp program is among the scores of agencies—both public and private—that are thrown into action to aid the victims. The tempo picks up, phones ring, and typewriters clatter. During it all, the radio is kept tuned to the weather report.

During the first 3 months of this year, the Southeast has had more than its share of natural disasters. The peaceful weather conditions of the deep South were first interrupted by an unusually heavy ice storm that toppled trees as if they were dried arrangements, disrupting electrical power in many places.

Unseasonable snow followed in areas so far south that many children did not know how to make a snowman. The heavy precipitation crushed the roofs of many buildings, snarled traffic, and locked up entire cities.

Right behind came the rains. The mighty Mississippi, swollen beyond its banks, prevented many of its tributaries across Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee from emptying its waters. These rivers, also higher than many oldtimers could recall, overran levees and made lakes out of thousands of acres of rich delta land that would have ordinarily already been planted for crops. Hundreds of homes had to be evacuated because of the high waters. Many residents were left homeless for weeks, after losing nearly all of their personal property.

Then, late in the afternoon of April 1, a tornado of terrific force swooped down without warning near Jonesboro, Ga., and spun crazily across Georgia into South Carolina. With it came death and destruction. Hundreds of homes—many owned by those who could least afford it—were crushed like paper boxes.

All of these natural disasters have had at least one thing in common: they disrupted lives. People were left temporarily without jobs and places to stay, many of them were without incomes, and almost all were without food. As quickly as possible, county, State and Federal agencies joined hands to provide food for these victims.

The food distribution program provided USDA-donated foods for mass feeding in shelters operated by the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Civil Defense, National Guard, and other agencies.

In those counties which operated food stamp programs, disaster victims were certified immediately so they could purchase food for their families.

In disaster situations, victims are normally certified under the provisions of regular food stamp program operations, which allow for extreme hardship and emergencies. The certification period may vary depending upon the hardship circumstances.

Chattanooga, Tennessee, and surrounding Hamilton County is a good example of how food stamp issuance on an individual hardship basis provided prompt assistance to April flood victims. When the Tennessee River and Chickamauga Creek overflowed

their banks and made a huge lake of the area, officials of the Public Welfare Department did not wait for a disaster emergency to be declared. They began issuing food stamps on a hardship basis, with on-the-scene guidance from FNS disaster food specialists.

A 4-person disaster household eligible for the program received \$112 worth of food coupons. The amount they paid depended on their calculated income, which took into consideration their hardship resulting from the disaster. For example, repair costs that a family may endure were considered in determining eligibility.

The effectiveness of the program is clear: 1,470 households, representing 5,202 persons, were issued \$145,965 in food stamps in 11 days. Of this amount, \$136,980 was in bonus coupons while \$9,185 was paid in cash by the victims. Of this amount the Red Cross paid \$2,739 for flood victims unable to buy their allotment of stamps.

When disasters reach extreme proportions and the State agency does not feel it can handle the victims through the regular food stamp certification channels, the State agency requests FNS to approve emergency procedures. In this case the certification process is stripped to the basics.

Disaster victims must meet three requirements to receive coupons under emergency procedures: reside within the disaster limits, have access to cooking facilities, and have suffered a reduction or inaccessibility of income or cash resources as a result of the disaster. Coupons are issued without charge to those who qualify. The length of the certification depends upon the length of the emergency period.

During the flooding in Mississippi, Lowndes, Warren, Leflore, and Monroe counties were the first approved for emergency issuance and operated under those procedures.

The role of the food stamp program—providing food for those who need it—does not actually change during the tragedies caused by natural disasters. The excitement, and in some cases the change in procedures, may however, make this role seem even more urgent.

how food stamps aid Disaster victims

*After disaster hit the
Southeast, flood victims
applied for food stamps.*





This farmhouse in Leflore County, Miss., near Greenwood, is typical of the many that were devastated by the floods that ravaged the Southeast this year. As a result of the high waters, the farmers' main crops, cotton, corn, and soybeans, have been threatened.



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New Orleans STYLE

By Ronald J. Rhodes

"We TRY TO SERVE 'em what they like."

With that kind of philosophy from the cafeteria manager at Archbishop Rummel High School in New Orleans, it's no wonder that the average daily participation in the lunch program runs close to 100 percent.

For the luncheon menu is no set thing at Rummel, where students can choose from a hamburger or barbecue sandwich lunch with french fries and salad or a regular meal usually offering a selection of entrees. Both meet USDA requirements for a Type A meal.

Mrs. Sara Ciaccio has been cafeteria manager at Rummel for about 5 years, and her skill in meeting the needs of the students is noted throughout the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

"When a student tells me he wants tacos for lunch, if at all possible he gets tacos," she said.

One student, for instance, had dental problems and could eat only soft foods. "So we provided something he could eat every day," reported the cheerful cafeteria manager.

But Rummel is just one example of the outstanding food service program operated within the Archdiocese. Lunch participation in the 102 schools runs 87 percent, amounting to 46,000

students served each day. Students pay 25 cents per lunch in the elementary schools, 35 cents in the high schools.

"Our greatest shortcoming is in the girls' high schools," pointed out Food Service Director John Schloegel. "We have a terrible time convincing these girls they can eat a well-balanced meal and still maintain proper weight."

At these schools the cafeteria offers salad lines featuring five selections each day, plus a soup line and the regular lunch, all meeting Type A meal requirements—to entice the girls to eat.

One innovation proving to be the most popular throughout the system in promoting the lunch program is a special day each month featuring foods from a particular country.

"The schools really go all out for these," points out Schloegel. "Art departments decorate the cafeteria. In some schools the bands play special music. It's really a great occasion."

During Hawaiian Day at Rummel, Schloegel baked a whole pig for the festivities. "Unfortunately, we never were able to get an apple in the pig's mouth," he laughed.

On other days a chef from one of the famous New Orleans restaurants

is invited to direct the preparation of the food at one of the high schools. These restaurants are delighted to do this, since the students represent their future customers.

Aside from all the festivities, Schloegel thinks two main points represent the success of the lunch program in the Archdiocese: meeting the needs of individual children and preparing good food.

"We wouldn't think of having a standardized menu throughout the archdiocese," he said. "Our students include blacks, whites, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans and even Indians, which means a wide variation in food preferences. So our only standardization throughout the school system is that the meal must meet FNS nutritional requirements."

Managers have considerable opportunity to vary the menu, since they are provided with a thick volume of recipes, to which new recipes are continually being added. Each recipe is tested by cooks with different levels of experience. When approval is given by all the cooks involved in the test, then the recipe is included in the book.

Schloegel and three supervisors check meal plans submitted by the managers monthly. Meals are evaluated and occasionally suggestions are made for improvement.

A lot depends on the way the food is presented to the students, according to Schloegel. In one of the schools he visited recently, "soul food" was on the menu. He sampled one of the dishes consisting of a mixture of cabbage and turnip greens served on a bed of rice. Although he thought the concoction delicious, he couldn't believe the students would accept it. "I was just amazed at the small amount of plate waste."

Schloegel stressed the importance of making food appealing from the standpoint of looks as well as taste. "After all, you look at the food before you taste it," he said. For that

reason he has given his cooks special training in garnishing food.

"When I see a serving line that looks bland, I bring the cafeteria manager out to look at it and ask if it appeals to her. If the manager doesn't find the food attractive, why should she expect the kids to?"

In addition to the regular staff, the archdiocese food service program maintains two "floating managers" who are ready to take over in case of illness or go to a trouble spot.

Schloegel encourages principals to think of the cafeteria manager as part of the faculty and to encourage her participation in faculty meetings.

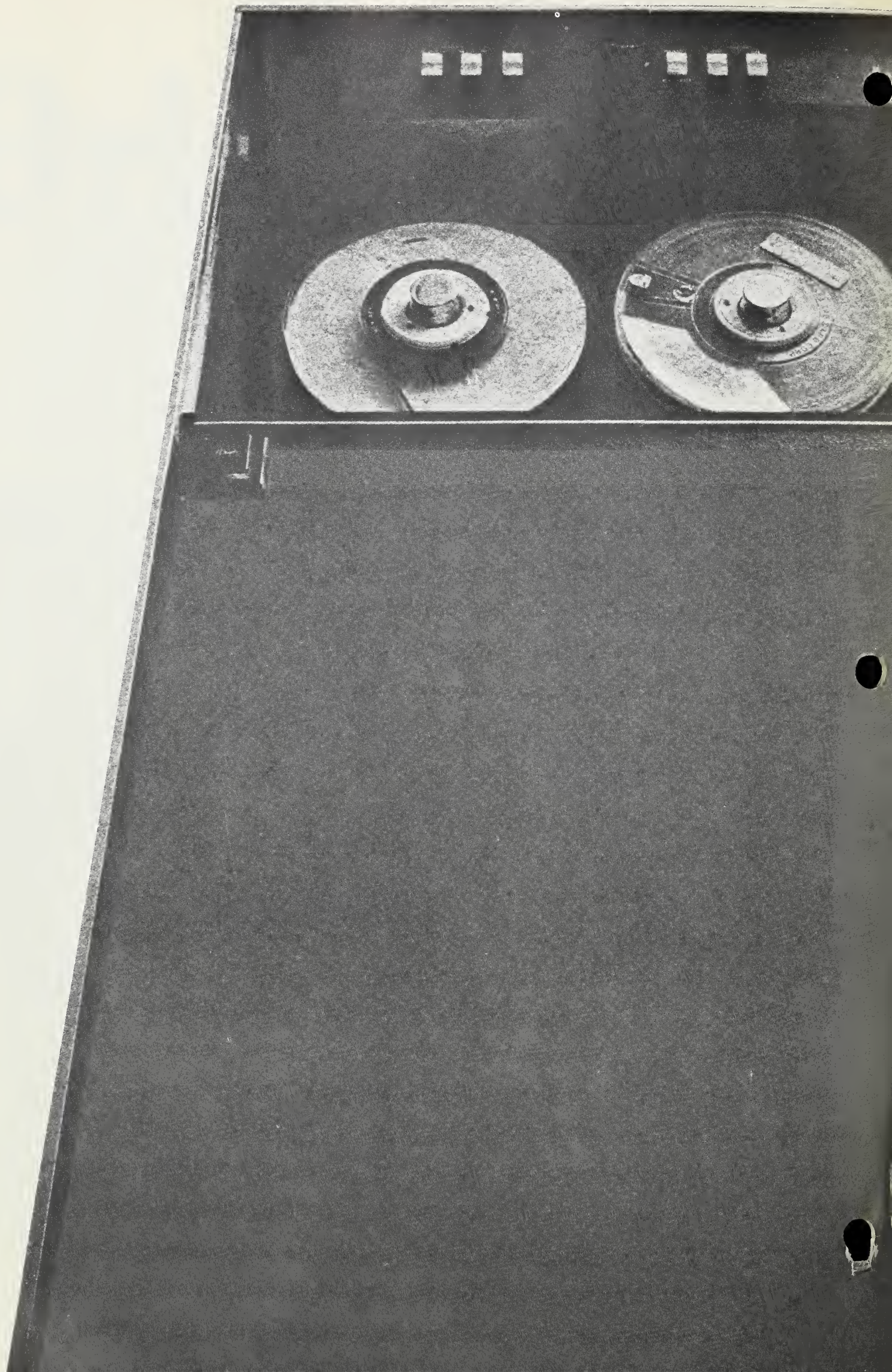
Efforts are made to make the students feel a part of the cafeteria program. Cafeteria managers meet with their student councils each month to get ideas from the students.

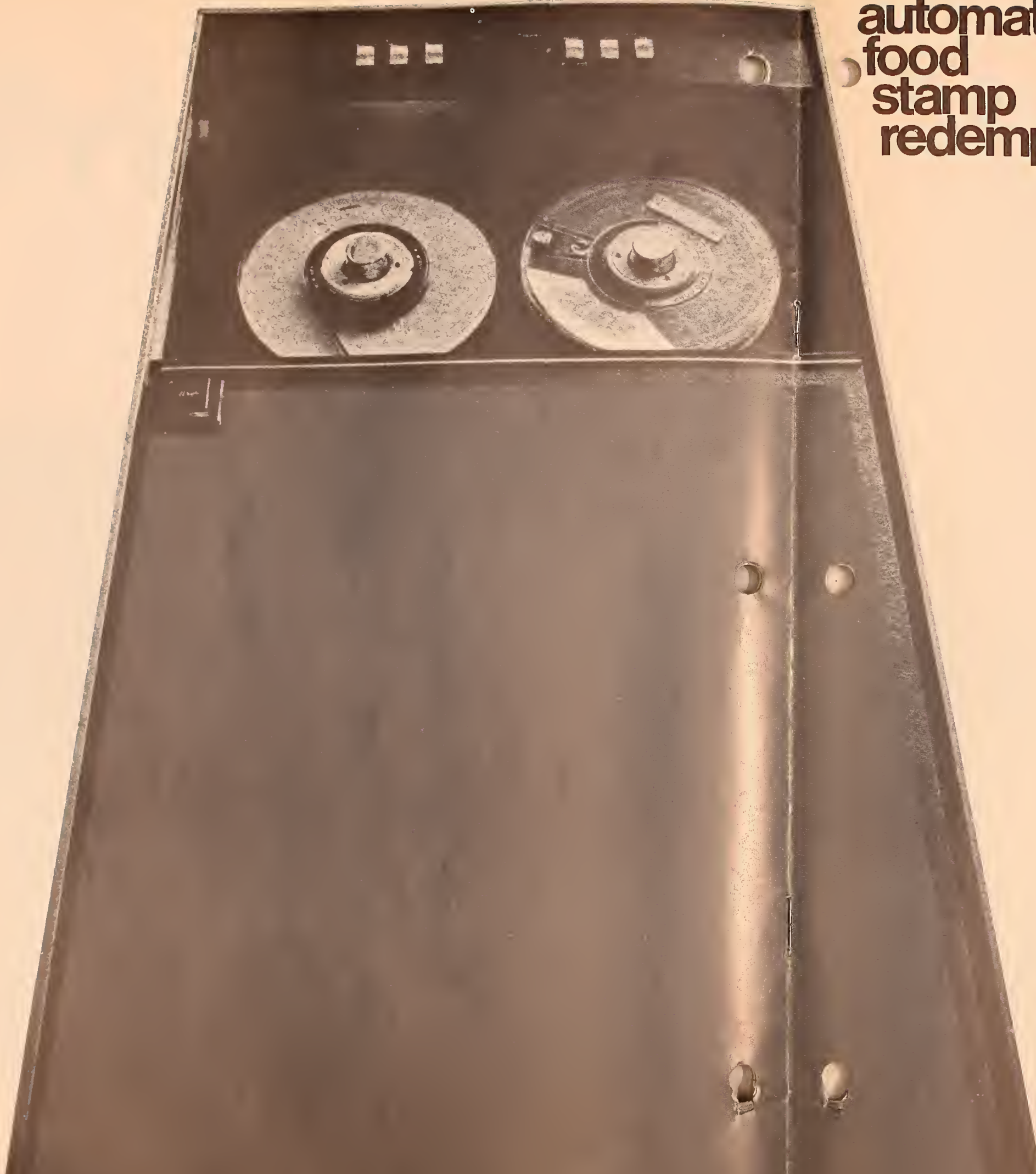
In keeping with student involvement, Rummel features a condiment table where students help themselves to mayonnaise, catsup, salt, pepper and salad dressings. "We find the cost is actually less than when the condiments were served along with the meal," said Mrs. Ciaccio, "and the students love it."

It's just one more way the food service staff has found "to serve 'em what they like." ☆

One day each month, schools in the New Orleans Archdiocese serve foods from foreign countries as a special treat. At San Augustin High, cafeteria workers dressed in colorful costumes (left) prepare an English feast: roast beef with cabbage, Dutchess potatoes, Emperor's dessert, and Purple Knight punch. Food service manager Jimmy Day (right) plays British ambassador as he checks to make sure the students are enjoying the lunch. On "special foods" days, lunch participation usually hits 100 percent.







automating food stamp redemption

WHEN FOOD AND NUTRITION Service and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) officials first studied the administrative task ahead of them in automating USDA's procedure for recording the number of food coupons each grocer receives, there was unanimity of thought.

Formidable.

They were right. Today an average of 1.2 million computer cards are being processed each month at USDA's Minneapolis ASCS Commodity Office as they arrive from 180,000 authorized retailers across the Nation.

In order for a grocer to receive payment for food coupons he accepts in his store, the coupons must be turned in to a bank (or a wholesaler who subsequently turns them in to a bank) with a form called a redemption certificate. Until late 1969 the banks sent the redemption certificates to the FNS field offices where the recordkeeping of redemptions for all retailers was done by hand.

As the food stamp program began expanding more rapidly, the manual system of recording redemptions became cumbersome. Quantities of redemption certificates were increasing too fast for clerical employees to keep pace. Recordkeeping was laborious, prone to error, and becoming more expensive as more manpower was required to do the job.

In September 1969, after much analysis and preparation, a pilot automated data processing system for processing redemption certificates began in three areas—St. Paul, Minn., St. Louis, Mo., and Carbondale, Ill. Under the automated system the redemption certificates were sent by

banks to the Minneapolis computer center, where the redemption amounts were keypunched and fed into a computer system.

The pilot project proved successful, and plans were made to implement the ADP system nationwide. New York City was automated in September 1970, and New York State became the first State to implement the ADP system in January 1971. Other States followed on a staggered timetable.

With increasing amounts of redemption certificates being processed as States became automated, an inherent problem in the ADP system became apparent. The field offices had been spared the burden of looking at each certificate, but now the control unit at the computer center had to examine each document and the information had to be manually keypunched into the computer. Because of this, the keypunching and clerical staff at the computer center had to increase continuously. And employees had to work in multiple shifts to keep up with the workload.

In early 1971, FNS and ASCS personnel began to hunt for a way to improve the system which would reduce the need for so vast a clerical and keypunching staff, and reduce errors caused by manual keypunching.

Charles Cash, deputy director of management for the ASCS Commodity Office at the time, explained, "We knew that the redemption process had to be automated, but we weren't precisely sure what the best way would be."

The "best way" as it turns out was the result of a finely tuned coordi-

The key to the process is a specially designed punched card which replaced the old redemption certificate form. This card has enabled the com-

The accuracy factor of the scannable card system has increased over

In addition, the conversion to automated processing has allowed FNS to reduce its clerical staff and consequently the number of field offices from 301 to 164. ☆

The key to the automated redemption process is the prepunched certificate which is sent to participating grocers. Using a #2 pencil, the grocer fills in the value of the food coupons he receives, and blackens the corresponding block beneath each number. He records the name and address of his bank, dates the card, and signs it. The bank places its stamp in the upper right corner and forwards the card to the computer center.

food and nutrition

It's 11 A.M. IN PHILADELPHIA, and Karen — a slender, friendly teenager—is setting out prepacked lunches for herself and her schoolmates.

For Karen, the seemingly minor task is a challenging, multi-purpose lesson.

She and her 145 classmates are mentally retarded.

The youngsters, ages 6 to 17, are students at the St. Katherine Day School for the Mentally Retarded. Located in a suburban setting on the edge of the city, the tuition-free school draws its students—of different races and religions—from inner city areas.

"When the lunch program started, I was fearful," recalled Sister Mary Lawrence, St. Katherine's principal. "I didn't see how we could ever do it."

The children had to be assembled for lunch in two shifts, because the largest room in the school, which doubles as cafeteria and gym, could only hold half the student body. And, although the food was delivered daily already packaged in disposable containers, the milk had to be refrigerated, the hot portions stacked for the oven, and everything set out on tables for the lunch shifts.

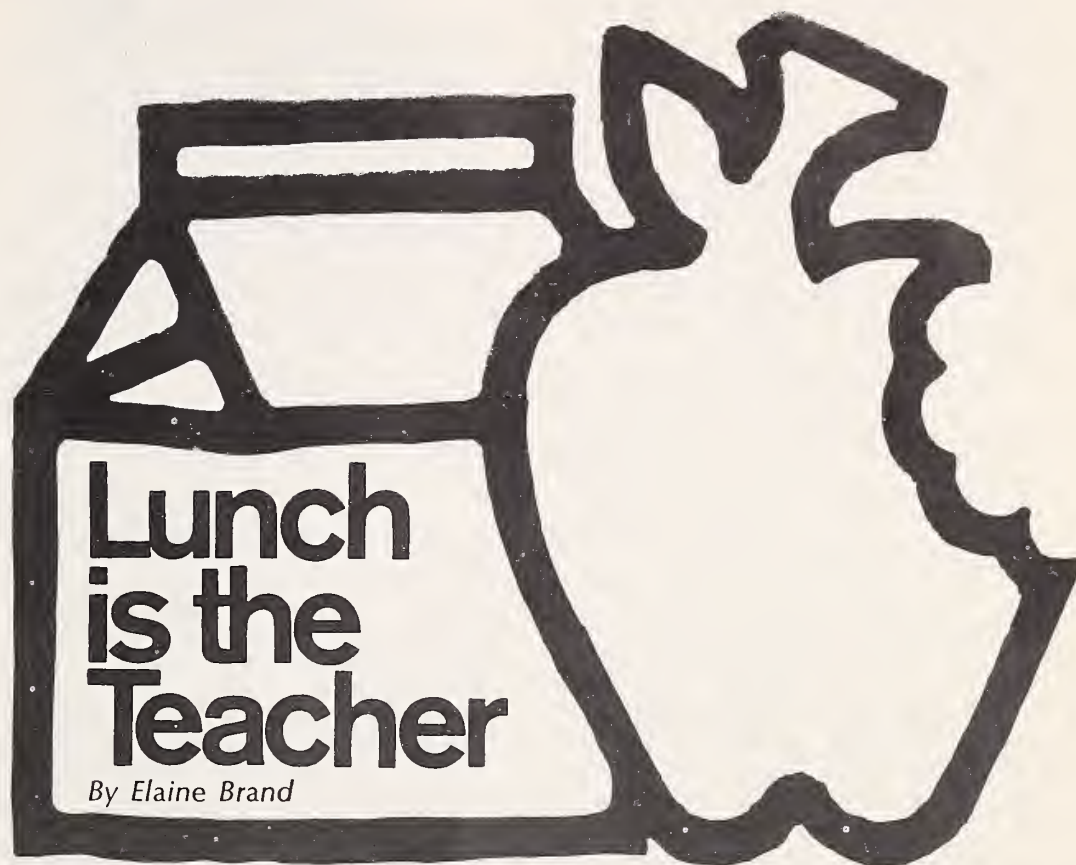
"But by the time the second week came around," the Sister continued, "I knew I had nothing to worry about. Having the kids help out, we were able to benefit from the lunch program in more ways than one."

Michael is one of the helpers this semester. In his required jacket and tie (the girls wear plaid uniforms), he looks the part of a young gentleman, and he is. Approaching a doorway with a woman visitor the other day, he gallantly stepped aside and said, "After you."

Sister Mary Lawrence listed some of Michael's achievements as a result of his new position.

The lunch program is teaching Michael a sense of responsibility. He knows he must be in school on time in order to place the milk cartons in the refrigerator. His memory is developing, too; he can handle each task without being told.

Many of the retarded are also poorly coordinated, and the small tasks help Michael and his classmates



develop physical dexterity. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Michael and others are building confidence and self-esteem, stemming from the knowledge that their services are really needed and appreciated.

Although the lunch program serves a special purpose at the St. Katherine School, its primary aim is sound nutrition.

Since the day begins for most of the youngsters with a long bus ride from West and South Philadelphia, Sister Mary Lawrence said, food service became a necessary part of the curriculum.

Even when the school operated on split shifts a short time ago, students grew listless and inattentive as the day passed. The school's decision to go to a full day compounded the problem.

Help was sought and received from Patrick Temple-West, who supervises school food service in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia under the Cardi-

nal's Commission on Human Relations. A lunch program was started, and according to teachers at the school, it has brought about a better learning atmosphere for the students.

"We can see the difference in the children," Sister Mary Lawrence declared. "Now, they don't get tired and listless in the afternoon. Their concentration and attention have improved. Even attendance is better."

As with most children, there were problems at first with strange foods. But the youngsters were asked to sample everything.

"Their tastes in food are expanding," the principal noted. "We're even doing well with vegetables now."

Less than 2 years ago, the St. Katherine School was unable to provide a lunch program. Like many other schools in the Archdiocese, it lacked kitchen facilities.

Then a lunch program was begun in some of the schools, including St. Katherine's, on an "emergency stop-

gap" basis, according to Patrick Temple-West. The meals included a meat or poultry dish in individual portion cans, heated in portable ovens.

Last fall, St. Katherine's became one of 25 schools under the Archdiocese to switch to "airline" lunches, so called because they resemble the prepacked meals served on planes. Local firms supply and deliver the hot and chilled "prepacks" as well as milk to participating schools, which have each been equipped with a convection oven for heating the meals and a portable trash compactor for disposing of garbage.

On a recent day at St. Katherine's, the hot portion of the lunch was spaghetti and meatballs. The cold portion consisted of fresh fruit, cookies and a roll and butter. A half-pint of milk was served with each lunch.

All meals are Type A lunches, designed to meet roughly one-third of a child's daily nutritional needs. Students from low-income families receive their meals free. FNS helps to underwrite the cost of meals and equipment.

St. Katherine's "helpers" in the lunch program are chosen each semester. Five teenagers are picked from the school's "advanced trainable" group. These are youngsters whose I.Q.'s are under 55, as opposed to the "educable" group who have I.Q.'s ranging up to 75. The latter group studies academic subjects in preparation to be self-supporting when they graduate. As adults, the "advanced trainables" will probably progress to sheltered workshops, where jobs are selected by supervisors to meet the capabilities of retarded persons.

While the lunch program provides both nutrition and education for the youngsters, it is only a part of the overall effort at St. Katherine's.

There is a high level of educational professionalism. The sisters, who all have chosen to work with retarded youngsters, are assigned to the school only after years of special training.

As a result, the children receive the best education possible. They benefit from the strong dedication of the sisters as well as the parents and volunteers. ☆



catching
the
ethnic
flavor

By Benedicto Montoya

BECAUSE OF ITS MASSIVE food aid programs, food use and preparation is important to USDA. The Food and Nutrition Service, assisted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), is very involved in developing recipes that meet exacting nutritional requirements as well as mass appeal. The recipes have generally been traditional, using basic foods in standard ways.

Ethnic recipes have been developed for group and family feeding—lasagna, chop suey, tacos, etc. But because of the need to appeal to the majority, the recipes undergo change in the labs and lose the subtleties of ethnic cookery.

Realizing this, FNS' Nutrition and Technical Services Staff, assisted by ARS, recently took a different approach.

A pilot project was designed to involve ethnic groups—Mexican-Americans and Navajos—in the de-

velopment of authentic recipes. The recipes will be used by Mexican-American or Navajo families participating in food assistance programs, and by schools participating in the National School Lunch and other child nutrition programs with a majority of Mexican-American or Navajo students.

Equipped with food knowledge, pencils, paper, and a few disposable lab coats, Nada Poole, an FNS nutrition programs specialist, and Eulalia Muschik, an ARS home economist, took to the field to gather the genuine family recipes. Dispatched to gather the group feeding recipes were Amelia Cazier, FNS nutrition programs specialist, and Mabel Walker, ARS nutrition analyst.

While the experts primarily wanted to observe food preparation and record recipes, they also planned to develop methodology during the pilot project for expansion of the study to other ethnic groups.

The collecting of the recipes began in early March in Stockton, Calif., in the fertile San Joaquin Valley. San Joaquin County participates in the food distribution program and has a large Mexican-American population.

Working with trained Mexican-American aides from the University of California Agricultural Extension Service's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), Ms. Poole and Ms. Muschik began observing and recording.

The EFNEP aides were asked to prepare Mexican dishes while the USDA specialists looked on. No specific dishes were asked for; however, since the recipes were to be used by low-income families, low-cost ingredients were to be stressed.

More than 20 recipes were collected, ranging from simple tortillas and frioles refritos (refried pinto beans), to more complicated mole (a thick, spicy sauce) with chicken, batter-dipped vegetables, stuffed zucchini squash, sweet tamales made with pineapple and raisins, and salad made from a backyard grown and home-canned prickly pear cactus.

The trained EFNEP aides rarely work from a written recipe, "Unless it is a new food," one explained. Only occasionally do they use a measuring cup or spoon. Instead, it is a pinch of this and a handful of that. A recipe is only right when the consistency of the mixed ingredients feels right, and has a certain taste or look.

In order to record the amounts going into each dish, Ms. Poole and Ms. Muschik would first have the aide pour a handful of flour into a measuring cup, determine if the homemaker had a three-quarter or full-cup hand, and continue to record from there. They would continue to determine amounts in this manner when the project was taken to the Navajos.

An important part of the project was field testing of the recipes. Extension Service employees, many of them Mexican-Americans, were more than willing to test the foods for lunch.

The forms used showed three faces—one frowning, one expressionless and another smiling. The tester

simply marked the box under the face which best described how he felt about each food.

In addition, the USDA representatives considered such things as plate waste and difficulty of preparation.

The recipes gathered during the 4 days in Stockton will be put into an FNS pamphlet and distributed primarily to low-income families participating in USDA food programs. The pamphlet will include three sections: one in English, one in Spanish, and one in simple step-by-step illustrations. A draft form of the pamphlet will be sent back to the San Joaquin County EFNEP homemakers so that they may test the recipes.

From Stockton the FNS/ARS specialists took their traveling laboratory to the land of the Navajos.

The Navajo Nation (population 130,000) covers an area of 16 million acres, most of it located in northern Arizona, with sections spilling over into New Mexico and Utah.

The food distribution program provides food aid in Arizona, reaching about 30,000 Navajos. Those Navajos living in New Mexico and Utah can participate in the food stamp program.

To the casual observer, the Navajo Nation seems to be mostly unproductive land. Yet, the Navajos have learned what the land has to offer; their traditional foods reflect this knowledge.

Wild potatoes, onions, celery, spinach, cactus, berries and yucca fruits are collected and used in native dishes. On fertile canyon floors and other watered areas, Navajo farmers grow corn for their breads and cereals, squash and beans.

The Navajo Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity (ONEO) homemakers, who work among their people much like the Mexican-Americans in Stockton, are teaching the Navajos how to weave the donated foods into their native diets. USDA has assisted by providing such commodities as pinto beans, instead of other dry beans, and double the usual allotment of donated flour to make the widely used Navajo bread. USDA helps boost the nutritional value of these breads by contracting to buy special high lysine flour.

The Navajo ONEO homemakers delighted in demonstrating their native foods and methods of preparation. In Crownpoint the emphasis was on using Navajo foods, such as blue cornmeal, and using foods available to food stamp recipients in local stores. At Fort Defiance, the homemakers showed how USDA foods were being adapted to Navajo tastes.

Native Navajo recipes have been verbally handed down through the centuries from mother to daughter. Since many Navajo families still prefer their traditional cooking methods, the Navajo ONEO aides maintain their skills of cooking over an open fire, or baking underground.

The Navajo homemakers work with the traditional tools—such as sticks from the greasewood bush, which are used for mixing, and the Navajo strainer, which resembles a small whisk broom. Breads or pancakes cooked on a hot grill are still turned with the finger tips.

The more than 20 Navajo recipes collected included wild celery sauce, yucca banana sauce, blue marbles, and Navajo cake.

The Navajo aides also demonstrated how to make juniper ash, which is used for baking powder and keeps the blue color in products made from blue cornmeal.

Navajo homemakers also showed how they grind dried corn between stones, which their grandmothers and mothers would spend hours doing. Now, however, most families take their corn to a mill, which takes only minutes.

At Crownpoint, the prepared foods were taste-tested by Navajos from nearby offices.

At Fort Defiance the testing took on an added dimension. The Navajo ONEO homemakers took the foods as they came off the stove to the lobby of the donated foods warehouse where they handed out samples to participants in the food distribution program.

The Navajo recipes will be compiled into a pamphlet printed in English with very detailed but simple step-by-step illustrations. While the Navajos have a written language, very few can read it.

As Ms. Poole and Ms. Muschik

gathered ethnic family recipes, Ms. Cazier and Ms. Walker began visiting Navajo schools to collect recipes for group feeding.

USDA provides schools with a variety of recipe tools to work with. The USDA recipe card file offers more than 320 recipes, ranging from main dishes, soups and salads, to desserts.

However, the recipes are designed to meet majority needs and tastes. Although a few State and local food service personnel have designed menus and developed recipes to meet the needs of ethnic children, USDA has recognized the need to make ethnic recipes more widely available.

By going directly to schools with a large majority of ethnic students, the food specialists would be able to record the ethnic recipes used in schools and at the same time evaluate food acceptability.

First stop on the group feeding project was an elementary school in Fort Defiance, Arizona.

The project had already generated a great deal of interest among the school's Navajo food service personnel. When the preparation of native foods began, this interest turned to enthusiasm.

"Despite the added labor involved in preparing the native foods, they seemed happy to be making something the children would really like," Ms. Cazier said.

This feeling of excitement was shared by the children. One child wrote on his food acceptability form, "Please stay, we want more Navajo foods."

Added labor and preparation time is a large factor in why many schools don't make ethnic foods. Yet, Ms. Cazier and Ms. Walker believe that labor and time can be saved if methods can be standardized and equipment effectively used. The Navajo food service personnel, Ms. Cazier explained, prepared the foods much like they would at home.

At Fort Defiance, for example, the kitchen staff made fry bread (served as a base for Navajo tacos, an accompaniment to mutton stew, or as a bread with honey). The traditional Navajo way is to flatten the dough into eight inch circles by slapping it

between the palms of the hand, spinning and stretching it with each pat. They made more than 1,500 in this way. At a school in Rio Grande City, Texas, Mexican-American food service personnel made more than 1,200 Pan de Polva (Mexican wedding cookies) by rolling and forming each cookie by hand into the shape of a small ring before baking.

The USDA specialists found that the USDA-donated foods the schools

used were very adaptable to Navajo and Mexican foods.

Pinto beans were used in various ways by the Mexican-American and Navajo cooks; USDA cornmeal and flour were very adaptable to their baked goods; and tomatoes, powdered milk, and meats all maintained the authenticity of the native foods.

There was no problem with either the Mexican-American or Navajo foods meeting USDA's Type A re-



A Navajo ONEO homemaker in Crownpoint, N.M., (above) prepares bread from blue cornmeal using the traditional greasewood stirring sticks. A USDA specialist looks on and carefully records each step. At Fort Defiance, Ariz., (below), where ONEO homemakers are teaching the Navajos how to cook with donated foods, a Navajo woman tests a macaroni and meat dish. By checking the happy, sad or expressionless face on the evaluation form, she indicates her reaction to the meal.

The school food service staff in Chinle, Ariz., (right) make special Navajo breads.

quirements since the school food service personnel are trained to meet this standard.

The recipes from the Navajo schools included:

Blue corn bread—made from ground blue corn and combined with bread flour and other ingredients.

Mutton stew—mutton cubes cooked until tender with fresh vegetables and seasoned with salt, pepper and crushed red pepper and chili.

Pasole—cooked mutton cubes combined with golden hominy, red and green chiles, and well-seasoned with salt, pepper and crushed chili powder.

Navajo tacos—fry bread topped with layers of cooked seasoned ground beef and pinto beans, shredded cheese, lettuce and tomatoes.

Indian Pudding—yellow cornmeal cooked with eggs and fat, flavored with molasses, ginger, nutmeg, and

other seasonings, and baked.

The recipes were taste-tested by fifth and sixth graders at Fort Defiance school.

The face forms were used and the children were overwhelmingly in favor of the foods.

Their reasons ranged from, "I like it because I like it," to "... because I got a big one." The most direct and concise response received was, "Because I am Navajo."

At Chinle High School, where additional Navajo recipes were gathered, the observers determined acceptability by watching plate waste and the students' reactions to the food.

From there the USDA representatives traveled to Monte Vista, Colo., and Rio Grande City, Tex., to gather authentic Mexican recipes.

Although many new foods have been adopted and developed by the Mexican people over the ages, the ancient Aztec foods of corn, beans and chili remain the staples. Dried ground corn is the basis for breads and the corn husks are used as wraps for tamales; beans are served in a variety of ways and at almost every meal; and chili, which comes in hot and mild varieties, is added as a seasoning to many dishes.

The more than 20 recipes collected at Monte Vista and Rio Grande City include:

Sopapillas—a yeast bread dough rolled flat and cut into three-inch triangles. These are deep-fat fried on each side until golden brown and served hot as bread or with honey as a dessert.

Calabacita with pork—cooked cubed pork blended with summer squash, tomatoes, and corn and seasoned with cumin, onions and garlic.

Guacamole salad—mashed avocados mixed with chopped tomato and fresh onion and seasoned with garlic, salt and lemon.

The recipes collected during the group feeding portion of the project will be sent back to be tested in the kitchens where they originated. USDA then plans to distribute the recipes to regions with large Indian or Mexican-American populations. The recipes will be available nationwide when they are included in the next recipe card file. ☆



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